

Harringrove AU/// Seaside Lovers by 1975isbae

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Summary:

On Steve and Billy's five year anniversary, Steve reminisces on the fateful night when he and Billy first met in their seaside town.

Harringrove AU/// Seaside Lovers

I wake up to the familiar sound of waves breaking and crashing onto shore. I don't think a person could ever get tired of waking up to this sound. However, this is not the only sound I hear on this early mid-July morning on the coast, I also hear the sizzling sound of bacon hitting the pan.

"Baby!" I shout from the bedroom, my deep voice resonating off the walls and no doubt reaching the kitchen.

"Yes love?" Billy responds, the deep morning voice arising from him as well.

"Come back to bed. It's our anniversary!" I yell, totally sounding bossy. Soon enough I hear footsteps headed in my direction and a mop of curly blonde hair appears in our bedroom doorway. The same mop of hair that I fell in love with and got married to five years ago today.

"Is that today?" He asks with a sarcastic smirk. I grin back at him, fully intoxicated by just looking into his eyes. He walks over to me slowly and climbs on top of me on the bed. Once he is above me I can't help but become mesmerized by his glance.

"Five years." I say with an astonished air.

"Five insanely long, insanely crazy and absolutely beautiful years." Billy comments.

I feel the warm sea breeze on my skin from the window left open last night. This wind feels like the warm embrace of a lover and reminds me of the happiness of the last five years.

It all started on a cool evening in early August. I had just moved to this rickety seaside town in hopes of "finding myself" and all that cliché bullshit. The real reason I packed up everything and left was to escape the tear streaked memories of my youth and hometown. Ultimately my decision to move was my parents ultimatum of change or leave when I came out to them a month ago. I always knew I had

to get out of that town and do something for myself. The first thought I had was to move to a small, quiet coastal town where living is easy and I can start fresh.

The house I bought was what you could call a fixer upper. Built deep in the marsh of the coast, there was almost no one around. On this August evening I was taking my second walk out to the ocean since I had begun living there. The walk through the dense marsh forest was twisty, long and confusing which almost caused me to lose all direction on my first walk out. I was holding more confidence in my navigation since this was my second time now.

I trek forward, only being guided by the distant sound of crashing waves. I finally emerge at the edge of the forest and step into the semi-warm sand, still holding heat from the scorching day. I haven't brought anything with me except my camera because I plan on taking a short stroll and snapping a few shots before returning home.

I walk aimlessly down the deserted beach. After about 15 minutes the sun starts to set so I capture a few pictures of the pinks and oranges painting the sky. I've always loved photography and it was one of the main reasons I moved to such a beautiful and serene area.

The sun is gradually disappearing so I turn back the way I came. As I walk back my eyes search for the opening that leads to my house. I spot what looks to be the clearing and make my way towards it. I walk through the dense forest, the sky getting darker and darker by the minute. After about 20 minutes of walking I start to get worried because nothing looks familiar. I try and keep my cool but I can't help the panic growing inside.

I hear rustling in the undergrowth and pick up my pace to a slow jog. I feel like I am only running farther in the wrong direction. A twig snaps close by and I freeze. I hold my breath and listen to the sounds of the surrounding nature. Nothing. I continue walking and another twig snaps. I pause again, glance up and my heart drops. There is a dark figure about 50 ft. away, the features impossible to make out in this light. My head swarms with all of the nightmares and scary films you could think of.

I turn quickly in the opposite direction and start to run. I'm thrashing

and fumbling through the greenery, their color turned a sinister black with the night. I hear fast pace footsteps behind me and sprint faster. Suddenly my foot catches on a root jutting above the dirt, which sends me flailing to the ground. The breath is knocked out of me and I think, this it is. I'm going to be murdered by a tall dark man in an unfamiliar jungle and no one will ever know. I pick my head up and snap it backwards to see the figure slowly approaching. My heart is beating hard in my chest and I feel like I can't move or breathe.

I faintly see an arm being outstretched and I wince, closing my eyes. A moment goes by and nothing happens. I open one eye and then the other and see an open hand in front of my face instead of the knife or gun I was expecting.

"Need some help dude?" The mystery voice says.

"I...I..." I stutter, shocked into speechlessness. I hesitantly grab his hand and he pulls me upright, my body aching from the harsh impact.

"Are you okay man? What are you doing out here past dark?" The man asks. I'm thinking I could ask him the same thing.

"Uh... I was out on the beach and I must've taken a wrong turn trying to make my way back home. I think that I might've went through the wrong clearing or something." I say, exasperated.

"Where do you live?" He asks, and I'm reluctant to answer but what do I really have to lose in my helpless situation.

"I live in the old shack on Beaufort. I actually just moved in earlier this week. This was only my second trip down to the beach and I probably should've planned ahead in case I got lost but I wasn't thinking." I say, somewhat embarrassed by my apparent foolishness.

"Oh, wow. I never thought anyone would actually buy that dump. It's only about a mile and a half up the road, I could drive you there if you want. My house is about a 10 minute walk away." He offers. I think over my options which include letting this strangely kind man drive me home or roaming around in the dark to potentially get killed by an actual murderer. So my mind is made up.

"Really? Sure, I mean, only if it's not an inconvenience to you." I say.

"Oh, no. I've got no plans. Unless you count cracking open a beer, turning on the radio and thinking about all the fish I didn't catch today." I chuckle at this.

"Okay then, lead the way." I say and follow closely behind him, listening for his footsteps for direction in the almost pitch dark.

This whole situation feels surreal. I mean, what am I doing following a complete stranger to his house in the secluded woods? But there was something about his tone of voice and his overall air that comforted me and made me put trust in him. We walked in silence, but not an awkward silence. After about five minutes I break this silence with conversation.

"If you don't mind me asking, what were you doing out alone in the woods at night?" I ask, hoping he doesn't think I'm too curious.

"I don't mind. I was out looking for plants."

"Plants?" I ask genuinely confused.

"Haha... yeah I'm sort of a collector you could say." He says. "I come out after dark so I don't have a heat stroke bending over so much." At this point we arrive at a house that honestly resembles the humble shack I own.

"And my house is a dump?" I say, not meaning any real insult.

"Hey, I never said mine was any better." He says, laughing lightly.

As we walk up the steps of the front porch the dim light exposes the features of this man for the first time. The yellow- orange haze casts magnificent shadows on his sculpted jaw and cheekbones. His skin is tanned nicely, no doubt from spending endless hours in the sun dishing, collecting plants or whatever other outdoor activities he partook in. He is wearing a tight white tank top and light blue Levi's with walking boots. The tank top is so thin I can clearly see the outline of a toned abdomen to go along with the built arms he carries. His hair is a mess of dirty blonde curls cut into a choppy mullet, probably cut by himself. I take in all of these details, but what

stands out the most are his piercing, icy blue eyes. I look into them for the first time and feelings of attraction, comfort and nervousness wash over me with no explanation.

My cheeks suddenly flush as I realize I've been staring at him for an unusually long time. I look away, anywhere but his burning gaze.

"You got a name, lost boy?" He says, grinning at the nickname.

"Steve."

"Steve?" He asks.

"Harrington. Steve Harrington." I say, still flustered.

"Nice to meet you Steve Harrington. I'm Billy. Billy Hargrove." He states, extending his hand for a formal greeting. We exchange a manly hand shake that doesn't really suit either of our natures, and then he steps aside.

"Some in and I'll show you what I meant about the plants." I slowly enter the home, and the shabbiness of the outside is completely lost by the interior decor. The entirety of the inside walls are covered in drawings, samples and information all about plants.

"Wow." I say, astonished by the time and dedication this must've taken. "This is... amazing."

"Thank you. I call it my hobby, but most people call it crazy." He says.

"No, not at all. Something like this takes real talent and understanding of nature." I say, openly complementing his masterpiece.

"What about you? Got any talents or hobbies?" Billy asks me.

"I'm really into photography. That's the reason I was on the beach tonight..." I say, then suddenly realize something. "My camera. Oh shit, I must've dropped it when I was running through the woods earlier." I say, and upset is an understatement.

"Well, there's no use to go look for it tonight and just get lost again. Just wait until the morning, you can stay here if you want and I'll help you look in the morning." He offers. Neither of us mention the fact that flashlights exist. Honestly the thought of staying here with a man I met less than two hours ago should make me uneasy, but Billy and his plant covered house is nothing but inviting to me.

"Okay. Um, you're sure i'm not intruding?" I ask self consciously.

"No, I promise. I could use some company after spending so much time alone out here." There is a hint of sadness in his tone that solidifies my decision to stay. Because I hold this same loneliness. At this point we are sitting on the flannel print cabin couch which strangely fits in this little beach shack.

"No family out here?" I ask, hoping he doesn't think i'm prodding, but he gives no sign of annoyance.

"Um, no. My mom died in a car accident when I was 10 and my dad took off shortly after. It's just been me and my house in the marsh ever since." He says.

"Oh, I'm really sorry." I say, regretting even asking.

"It's alright. I've had enough time to think it over and it was probably for the best. Taught me how to fend for myself." He says, eyes downcast.

"It's still not okay." I contemplate what I'm going to say next, and decide I haven't hid anything about myself so far, why start now? "My parents are homophobic pieces of trash. When I came out to them a month ago, they said you can either change or leave, so I left. I somehow ended up in a run down seaside town, but it's beautiful in its own way. And at least I can say I have one friend here." I say, and I hope that the declaration of friendship isn't premature and inappropriate. The smile on his face eases my nerves and comforts me. The stating of my sexuality doesn't seem to affect him, if anything he seems more relaxed than before.

"Thanks for sharing that with me. I know it was probably hard after what happened with your parents and their reaction. I support you."

"Well, I usually wouldn't tell someone so soon, but..." I pause, nervous. "I feel this sort of trust and comfort with you that i've never felt before. I would tell you anything if you asked which is really unusual, It feels like i've known you before, like in a past life we were friends or... something like that." I say, my cheeks once again turning red because I feel like I am oversharing.

"I understand. I've never really told anyone about my parents, but when you asked I didn't hesitate to answer. I trust you too." He says, exposing himself with those four words. I break his gaze and look around nervously. He senses this nervousness and changes the subject. He stands and heads towards the bedroom. He comes back holding a blanket, t-shirt and plaid pajama bottoms.

"Here are some things to help you feel more comfortable. I don't have an extra toothbrush, but you can use the mouthwash in the bathroom." He says generously.

"Thank you." I say. I head to the bathroom and change into the clothes. I splash cold water on my face. Then I open the mouthwash and swish some around in my mouth. Right as I am spitting it out there is a knock at the bathroom door.

"Yeah?" He cracks the door and his stone blue eyes peek in.

"Just making sure everything fit okay." He says kindly.

"Yeah, perfect fit." I say extending my arms to show him. His gaze on me lingers and makes me break a sweat.

"Okay, finish up and let me know if you need anything else. Anything at all." He says going to shut the door. My hand grabs the door before he can.

"Billy?"

"Huh?"

"Just... one thing." I say. In this moment the world falls away and it is only me and his enchanting eyes.

"Yeah?" I stare into his eyes in silence and then my eyes shift to his

lips. There they sit looking so sweet and inviting. I reach out with the same hand I grabbed the knob with and grasp a hold of the front of his tight white top. I pull him forward until our chests are touching and then firmly press my lips against his. I freeze this way thinking about what the hell I just did. I am about to pull away when I feel his hands fall into the small of my back and his lips begin to kiss me back. I wrap my hands around his neck and we kiss passionately. I'm running my hands through his tangled curls and I feel his hands running all over my torso. I feel nothing but bliss in these seconds and never want to stop. Eventually, he pulls away and we look in each others deep eyes.

"Minty." Billy says smacking his lips together. I burst out laughing, thanking him in my mind for not making this awkward.

"S...Sorry. I just... I don't know.." I say unavoidably awkward.

"Shh. It's fine. I'm not complaining." He says smiling.

"I should probably go to bed before I go and do something impulsive again."

"Be as impulsive as you want. I like this exiting side of you, don't resist it. But you're right it is getting late." He says walking back to the couch and I follow. I climb onto the couch and spread the blanket out.

"Goodnight Steve." He says. He then leans down and kisses my forehead. This makes me feel like a child with Billy as my protector.

"Goodnight Billy." I say and shut my eyes, falling into a sleep with dreams full of plants, mouthwash and everything else that reminded me of who, unknown to me at the time, I would spend the rest of my life with in our little seaside town.